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SUBJECT: FUR LEADERS EVASIVE ABOUT JANJAWEEED TIES

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Nyala Fur leaders were tight-lipped in a December 2 meeting with FieldOff about rumors of a growing alliance between the Fur and some janjaweed formerly loyal to the Government of Sudan (GoS). They spoke instead about growing insecurity throughout Darfur as a result of heightened janjaweed disenchantment with its traditional GoS supporter, which was manifesting itself in clashes between those sides around Nyala. Like other Fur leaders, these Nyala reps articulated conspiracy theories about GoS intentions in Darfur; had unreasonably high expectations for the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID); and offered a strategy for Darfur peace talks. Still, optimism did not prevail, and the leaders warned that if no relief came to the people on the ground, then "we don't want to be part of Sudan anymore." END SUMMARY.

"THE FUR WELCOME EVERYONE"

¶2. (SBU) In a December 2 meeting with FieldOff, a prominent Nyala Fur leader and the Nyala Dimlig-General claimed no knowledge about rumors of a growing alliance between the Fur and janjaweed members once loyal to the GoS but now disillusioned by the GoS' failure to make good on its promises of land, money and representation in exchange for their assistance in helping the GoS "stabilize" Darfur. However, the Dimlig-General made a point on at least four occasions during the two-hour conversation to highlight that "the Fur welcome everyone"; that the Fur have peacefully coexisted, including intermarriage, with Arab tribes since the 14th century; and that Fur farmers were forthcoming with their lands when Arab herders needed a place to graze.

¶3. (SBU) This hospitality, according to the Dimlig General, lasted only until the GoS allowed one of these Arab tribes (he mentioned the Rizeigat, the Habaniya, the Tarjam, the Sa'ada, the Miseriya and the Beni Halba) to use land that the Fur had not sanctioned, and problems gradually snowballed from there to the present situation. "Darfur went from a dispute between two people," the Dimlig explained, "to what it is now," and he attributed this escalation to the fact that "all the Government is concerned with is the Arab tribes."

¶4. (SBU) The Dimlig alleged that the GoS in the beginning and up to now supported the influx of Arab tribes from Chad as a way to arm them in an effort to destabilize the Government of Chad. This support, however, seems to have run its course, which is stoking janjaweed discontent and fueling the current fighting between the GoS and the janjaweed, who feel slighted by the lack of GoS follow-through. The Dimlig predicted that this fighting would only increase in the near future, as the janjaweed, like the Fur before them, pursue what they consider their entitlements from the GoS and as they struggle to establish some sort of political legitimacy.

¶5. (SBU) Neither the Dimlig nor the Fur community leader would go so far as to corroborate rumors of a Fur-janjaweed collaboration in

this common struggle, however, despite rumors of a rapprochement currently underway between those sides in Kabkabiya. The Dimlig acknowledged that Arab tribes were splitting against the GoS, particularly the Southern ("Baggara" or cattle-herding) Rizeigat, and that others were similarly dividing along geographic lines. He stressed that these tribes were isolated in their disillusionment with the GoS, adding that, "African tribes have their own problems with the GoS to worry about," without having to assume those of janjaweed deserters as well. The Dimlig said that certain factions of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), however, were incorporating former janjaweed elements into their ranks. (Note: Credible reports indicate that while some individual Arab militia leaders have joined JEM and SLA factions, such shifts are not yet widespread and have rarely included members of the nomadic Arab tribes responsible for many of the atrocities since 2004. End note.)

#### MORE UNREALISTIC UNAMID EXPECTATIONS

¶16. (SBU) Like other Fur leaders, the Dimlig General looked to UNAMID as the panacea for Darfur's problems, including mending the rift between the Arab and African tribes. To do this, he contended, UNAMID would first have to disarm all groups throughout Darfur. In a reference to the situation in Kalma, the Dimlig stressed that the GoS could never disarm populations independently of the international community, which would only result in use of force. He argued that IDPs were not IDPs if they had arms; once the weapons were removed, proper political space could be created for negotiations.

¶17. (SBU) In order for all groups to make the most of this political space, the Dimlig advised several steps. First, he reiterated that there should be disarmament of all armed groups in Darfur: African, Arabs and IDPs alike. Second, traditional tribal mechanisms and local leaders should be utilized to the furthest extent possible to

KHARTOUM 00001907 002 OF 002

begin the process of conflict resolution between the two original instigators of the Darfur problem: Arab and African tribes. Finally, he recommended addressing the issue of compensation as quickly as possible to free IDPs from their dependence on foreign assistance and to lay the groundwork for bona fide returns.

¶18. (SBU) COMMENT. It is clear that Fur leaders are protecting their credibility and constituencies by refusing to acknowledge complicity with the very janjaweed elements once responsible for their own persecution. The message that the Fur "welcome everyone" and are unwavering in their support of groups searching for "rights without discrimination," however, speaks for itself. Whether genuine or not, this attitude attests to the war-savviness that seems to have developed among Fur communities, motivating their adoption of the unlikeliest of allies as perhaps their last means of self-preservation. If this is indeed the case, then we can expect many more strange bedfellows to emerge in the coming weeks and months, a trend that will likely not be without consequence or repercussions on the ground. END COMMENT.

¶19. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

FERNANDEZ